

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 069

CS 012 379

AUTHOR Avery, Nanette L.
TITLE Utilizing Right Brained Assists, Vocabulary in Content, and Prior Knowledge To Improve Vocabulary Instruction in the Third Grade.
PUB DATE Apr 95
NOTE 57p.; Educational Specialist Practicum, Nova Southeastern University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Grade 3; *Instructional Effectiveness; Primary Education; Prior Learning; *Student Evaluation; *Vocabulary Development; *Vocabulary Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Brain Based Learning; Florida (Southeast); Vocabulary in Context Exercises

ABSTRACT

This project was developed and implemented in a private school in southeastern Florida to assess whether different instructional strategies would improve vocabulary recall, comprehension, and long-range retention in third graders. The program uses three approaches to provide vocabulary development: (1) contextual use of vocabulary; (2) the use of right-brained assists; and (3) the introduction of prior knowledge from which to build on. Six out of 20 third-grade students who scored below 75% on the vocabulary pretest were monitored throughout the 12-week implementation period. Levels of success were measured by the weekly vocabulary tests, a series of 4-week cumulative test-retest scores, and a final cumulative 12-week test-retest. An increase of 3% on the cumulative test-retest scores indicated success. All program objectives were met with the target group improving dramatically. This increase in score results favors a greater use of multi-approach in vocabulary instruction. Due to the success rate, all three third-grade teachers have begun to use the vocabulary program. Presently, feedback from these teachers has indicated very positive results with their own students. The teachers have found that right-brain assists with the whole class to be an inordinately positive interactive experience. It was found that some students were better able to generate ideas after group inspiration. (Contains 21 references. Appendixes include vocabulary word form, right brained assists, vocabulary tests, and peer evaluation survey.) (Author/TB)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

CS

ED 393 069

UTILIZING RIGHT BRAINED ASSISTS, VOCABULARY IN CONTENT,
AND PRIOR KNOWLEDGE
TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION IN THE THIRD GRADE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

N. Avery

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

by

Nanette L. Avery

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Abraham S. Fischler
Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova
Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Educational Specialist

The abstract of this report may be placed in a
National Database System for reference.

April/1995

CS012379

Abstract

Utilizing Right Brained Assists, Vocabulary in Content, and Prior Knowledge to Improve Vocabulary Instruction in the Third Grade. Avery, Nanette L., 1995. Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education.

Descriptors: Vocabulary Skills, Vocabulary Development, Reading and Communication skills, Prior Knowledge, Cognitive Process, Semantic Mapping.

This project was developed and implemented to assess whether different instructional strategies would improve vocabulary recall, comprehension, and long range retention in third graders. The program uses three approaches to provide vocabulary development: contextual use of vocabulary, the use of right brained assists, and the introduction of prior knowledge from which to build on. Six out of twenty third grade students who scored below 75% on the vocabulary pretest were monitored throughout the 12 week implementation period. Levels of success were measured by the weekly vocabulary tests, a series of four week cumulative test-retest scores, and a final cumulative 12 week test-retest. An increase of 3% on the cumulative test-retest scores indicated success. All program objectives were met with the target group improving dramatically. This increase in score results favor a greater use of multi-approach in vocabulary instruction. Appendices include vocabulary word form, right brained assists, vocabulary tests, and peer evaluation survey.

Table of Contents

	Page
Title Page.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
CHAPTERS	
I. Purpose	1
II. Research and Solution Strategy.....	13
III. Method.....	26
IV. Results.....	33
V. Recommendations.....	38
Reference List	40
Appendixes	
Appendix A: Vocabulary Word Form	42
Appendix B: Right Brained Assist for Verbs	43
Appendix C: Right Brained Assist for Adjectives and Adverbs	44
Appendix D: Right Brained Assist for Nouns	45
Appendix E: Vocabulary Pretest.....	46
Appendix F: Vocabulary Cumulative Test Retest	48
Appendix G: Peer Evaluation Scale.....	49

CHAPTER I

Purpose

This project was designed for development and implementation in a private school located in South Eastern Florida. The school blends both religious and secular education. The school serves students from kindergarten to sixth grade. Student population totals 690 with a 98% White ethnicity. There is about a 50% ratio of male to female students. Student ratio per class is on the average 23 children. There are two adults in each class, a full time master teacher and a part time assistant. The school has a total of 24 full time classroom teachers and 20 part time assistants. All of the classroom teachers and assistants are female and White. There are 12 teachers who hold masters degrees and one with a doctorate.

In addition to the teachers in the classrooms, there is a specialty staff; two art teachers, four teachers, nine physical education teachers, and one computer science teacher. There is a Religious Studies Director who oversees 11 teachers and the religious studies

program.

The site school provides daily care and enrichment programs for those students who need to stay after school. Children may participate in a variety of special classes. These classes are supervised by an adult member of the staff. The choice of programs changes three times a year to allow for a variety of experiences.

The site school was constructed in 1970 because parents in the community felt a need to establish a school where their children could receive both a secular and religious education. At the time there were no schools which were able to meet both needs, The school opened as a "one room" school house and has flourished into one of the most respected schools of its kind in the country now over 20 years later.

The philosophy of the school encompasses the idea that there must be an interaction between home and school. The focus placed on teaching and learning is not on rote, but rather an active and involved child. The goal of the secular curriculum is to provide students with the intellectual tools they need to advance further into their studies and move into the 21st Century. In addition, the capacity to apply those skills in real life

situations is also stressed. The religious studies aims to develop students who are secure and proud of their religious identity and feel spiritually and historically connected to their beliefs.

According to the admission procedure, students admitted into the school need to be of average or above average intelligence, free of major learning disabilities, socially mature, and emotionally stable. Students who wish to attend the site will go through a screening evaluation administered by an educational evaluator.

Due to the admissions procedure and small teacher to student ratio, there is no provision in the school for gifted education. Students are given ample one to one instruction so they can move along at their own pace.

There is one school director and one assistant director who are available full time. There is an educational consultant who tracks each class's progress and provides personalized attention to pupils with individualized difficulties.

The administrative office is considered the "nerve" center of the school. All of the parent contacts, requests or inquiries are initially handled by one of two

secretaries. They also supervise the day-to-day operations of the school.

The school's facility is constructed in 1970 situated on 15.5 acres and consists of:

44 classrooms, a library, a gymnasium, a fully furnished art room, a modern computer lab. The site also has a 100-seat chapel, two large special event areas with a stage, three playgrounds, and an outdoor playing field.

Students attending this site are from middle to upper income families. Most of the parents are graduates of universities or colleges and hold full time employment in a professional field. The parents are highly involved in their children's education and run a very successful parent association to assist in the school's fund raising endeavors.

The practicum site classroom is a third grade class of 20 students. Each student has participated in the process of the practicum. Each student's data was followed to target progress or the lack of progress during the implementation period. The class was involved in a twelve week project.

The writer of the practicum is the master teacher of the third graders involved in the practicum. The writer

is responsible for preparing and executing the lesson plans for the class, responsible for cooperating with and reporting to supervisors, required to maintain lines of communication with the parents of students, and is expected to be personally involved with every child in the writers charge.

Problem Statement

In February, 1991, the site school established a review of their Whole Language Program. Teachers from the intermediate and upper block classes, since September, had been using a cooperative share approach to gather a collective agreement for the third to fifth grade language lessons. Vocabulary lessons were designed and implemented in the following manner.

Vocabulary lists came from all academic areas, current events, basic skill areas, religious areas, and incidental learning. They included days of the week, months of the year, and some mathematics and writing process terms. In the third and fourth grades, the students were to define, show the pronunciation and syllabication, part of speech, and give an illustrated sentence for one word from each week's list. In the fifth grade the students were to learn all of the words on each week's list, giving multiple meanings, and parts of speech when necessary.

The problem was that, Standard Achievement Test scores showed the vocabulary scores of upper block

students had not risen significantly since the inception of the self imposed language lessons. It appears that the students were unable to retain the learned information for later use. Perkins (1993) explained that most students simply forget what they have been taught. This comes from the rudimentary fact that often they do not understand what they have been taught and they do not understand what they remember. What they do retain they do not use "actively".

Students at the site school had been given weekly vocabulary lessons whereby the students "demonstrated" their skills on Fridays as a consequence of the instruction given on Mondays. The students spent on an average of 45 minutes per week on vocabulary instruction. They may engage this knowledge for a limited time however, it appears that they had not internalized the information as "their own" to later retrieve it. Fourth and fifth graders Standard Achievement stanines indicated that the average stanine score for the reading vocabulary portion of the test was 6.75. The average stanine score for the spelling portion of the test was 6.54. Probable cause for such scores indicate that the understanding of the meaning of the vocabulary words and spelling of these

words were memorized. Students tested correctly on the Friday tests were unable to retrieve the information for later tests such as during the Standard Achievement Test. These previous scores from the fourth and fifth grade Standard Achievement Test indicate that early intervention could be applied in the site school to raise test scores.

Vocabulary instruction is an inherently important part of language learning. By helping students acquire and effectively use language, students will increase their varied experiences which will involve accompanying development of prior knowledge. The challenge to the instructor is to how to better serve the vocabulary needs of the students. In order to fulfill this instruction, vocabulary performance should be prescribed through learning outcomes, as defined by DeFabio (1987, p.168) "Outcomes are defined as the knowledge and skills that individuals can and do habitually demonstrate as a consequence of instruction and experience."

Naturally the scope of satisfying vocabulary instruction is not singular. Not only does the learning process have to be satisfied but the learners style of learning must to be fulfilled.

In an attempt to explain why some words are retrieved and kept in the students memory bank, the writer has designed classroom vocabulary instruction which recognizes the significance of utilizing right brained assists, selecting and giving the vocabulary in context, and allowing the student time to use the vocabulary correctly in a sentence. "Words do not exist in a vacuum and are not learned in a vacuum. The weekly list of 20 randomly selected words is almost a vacuum; tests made several months later will usually reveal that only a small proportion of previously unfamiliar words from such a list will be remembered. Words learned in a meaningful context are much more likely to stick in the memory" (Hook, 1982, p. 294). These three strategies show a correlation between the way a student receives information, the vocabulary, and a direct improvement on their weekly vocabulary test. These strategies also yield "connections between his/her personal life in making and expressing meaning... the ability to make connections within and across disciplines is an essential skill of the effective thinker and language user" (Defabio, p.176).

Four peer teachers from the third grade level were part of a core group used to assess and evaluate the components of the vocabulary curriculum during the implementation period. They were also encouraged to use the vocabulary program with their own students.

Twenty students in the third grade class have received the vocabulary instruction. These students are aged eight and nine years old. They are a heterogeneous mix of high, average and slightly lower than average achieving students. The students are described as white and belonging to upper and middle socio-economic levels. A co-variant variable (pretest) has determined six out of the 20 students who were monitored throughout the 12 week vocabulary instruction. The results of the pre-test prior to the vocabulary instruction received the following scores.

Pre-test Scores	
Student	Percent
A	37.4
B	20.8
C	49.9
D	54.08
E	45.7
F	49.9

Outcome Objectives

The outcome objectives focus on an effective and creative design for the implementation of vocabulary instruction for third graders. These objectives establish the ways in which the students should change as a result of a 12 week period of vocabulary classes. The proposed objectives were;

1. During day one and day two of the 12- week period, six out of the total 20 third grade students who scored the lowest grades on the pre-test will be monitored during the vocabulary implementation period.
2. During the 12- week period, the 20 third graders will read, discuss and define vocabulary words from literary works and poetry compiled by the teacher.
3. During the 12-week period the 20 third graders will use the prescribed right brained assist to define vocabulary words as evidenced by the correct usage of the

graphic organizer.

4. During a 12-week period, the 20 third graders will construct sentences utilizing weekly vocabulary as measured by teacher evaluation of successfully utilizing the definitions of the words.

5. Over a period of 12- weeks the six targeted third graders will increase their vocabulary test scores by 3% as evidenced by weekly teacher made vocabulary tests.

6. Over the first two weeks of the 12- week period, three peer teachers will evaluate the vocabulary curriculum for context, purpose, and procedure by means of oral group discussion and a written evaluation scale.

Chapter II

Research and Solution Strategy

The educational researchers in the field of curriculum development should begin their examination with an understanding of how children learn. It appears that teachers often deal with practical applications and do not always take into account the learning process.

The learning of languages is a complex experience which begins from birth. Language learning in the child can be viewed as a cycle. Mitchell and Tchudi (1989) have created a model which breaks the process into four separate but relative components; experience, perceiving, thinking, and communicating. In the components which include experience and perceiving, the use of language is the "link between what people perceive in the world and the concepts they store in their heads".

The use of words through language generate "the raw material for our thinking." Lastly, component four, communicating, is the transmission and receiving of information (p. 40). Mitchell and Tchudi state, "It is

important to recall, however that beneath all utterances lies much previous language activity" (p.42).

This language cycle is fueled by the very notion that during the process of constructing language. " The consumer of language [the child] ... has a structure of words and experiences in his or her mind, so there is a matching of language/experience at the point of communication..." (p.43).

"It is the vocabulary of a language which encompasses the stock of words of language which is used by a speaker or writer" (Hodges, ERIC). It can therefore be presumed that vocabulary learning is an essential part of language learning-that is-the more vocabulary a student acquires the deeper the student will be able to make meaningful syntax.

Griggs (1991) has emphasized the importance of recognizing the learning style characteristics of students .. " Everyone has a learning style. Our style of learning, if accommodated, can result in improved attitudes toward learning and an increase in productivity, academic achievement, and creativity."

The review of research indicates that accommodating students with different learning styles has been

successfully accomplished through the use of right brained assists or graphic organizers during language instruction. Arends (1991) agrees that at the time of the instruction, the right brained assist "becomes the hooks, the anchors, the intellectual scaffolding for subsequent learning materials" (1991, p. 243).

The use of graphic organizers was researched to determine their effectiveness with middle school students in aiding concept learning. The findings by Hawks (1986) supports their effectiveness in a number of ways. Hawks found that with the use of a graphic organizer, its use would provides students an overview of the material to be learned, provide a framework and reference points that help the learner in assimilation of new vocabulary and organization of a concepts in logical pattern, direct students to find and look for relationships in their learning, as well as strengthen the learners retention (p. 81-87).

In another study, students have expressed their understanding of literature by mapping a novel's major events after reading the novel. To aid visual learners, diagraming sentences was used although this method has often been looked at as being old fashioned and out dated

(Bateman & Seaton, 1993).

The idea of incorporating symbolic aids, such as graphic organizers into the vocabulary instruction was also seen as a benefit in the review of literature. Through the use of informal activities, such as mapping, students were able to brainstorm and utilize their prior knowledge. It was found that by employing a more formal approach, by arranging words on a visual "map", the relationship among words become more clear. (Hodges)

In a study of 52 different vocabulary instructions Stahl (1986, p.663) reported that "sustained attention to vocabulary may produce better comprehension." As indicated by Stahl, not all methods of vocabulary instruction were effective. Effective methods were found to take three principles into account; 1) the use of vocabulary in context, 2) the depth of processing 3) word exposer (p.664). Additional research conducted to also evaluate the use of providing strategies to assist vocabulary instruction established similar findings. "To be an effective strategy, an extensive and long-term vocabulary strand accompanying a parallel schematic or background-knowledge-development strand is probably called for" (Christen, ERIC).

Contextual knowledge is defined by Fairbanks and Stahl as " knowledge of a core concept and how that knowledge is realized in different concepts" (1986, p.74). In 1986, Stahl reviewed vocabulary teaching methods and found that a combination of contextual information in addition to the vocabulary definition resulted in higher student achievement than a singular method. What this appears to signify is a need to add vocabulary words in context along with definitional vocabulary learning.

"Therefore, in order to "know" a word, one must not only know its definitional relations with other words, but also be able to interpret its meaning in a particular context" (p.663). Stahl found that it was only through word knowledge from both definition and context did student comprehension increase; especially when different activities or examples of the word was used. "In practice this means that giving students a list of words and their definitions to memorize will probably not have much effect on comprehension, at least not by itself" (p.664).

Ianacone (1993) states, "One effective approach is to study vocabulary from the full context perspective" (p.42). He concludes that with his students, vocabulary

cannot be taught in isolation but must be presented in a complete essay in order for students to uncover the meaning of the particular word. Students are able to find definition meaning for a word that fits the specific context it is found in.

Stahl's study of vocabulary describes "depth of processing" as the depth to which a student makes a connection between new and known information (p.664). The review of literature found that prior knowledge " is an important step in the learning process... creating an opportunity to challenge our students to call on their collective experiences (prior knowledge) is essential. (Christen, 1991, ERIC)

Advocates of activating prior knowledge to increase comprehension have researched these effects on providing the student with specific strategies. In order to enrich background knowledge, Alvarez and Risko (1989) encourage students to use thematic organizers and mapping in their reading. Through this method, students were able to integrate previously learned information with use this new approach to their reading. What was accomplished was a better understanding of the text by the students.

Banwart and Duffelmeyer (1993) endorsed the use of

word maps to teach vocabulary to their students. The use of word maps was seen as a strategy which "enable students to visualize a word meaning, increase likelihood that a concept will be learned thoroughly, and reinforce what constitutes a good definition" (Schwartz and Raphael, 1985).

Hodge (1984, ERIC) contends that utilizing semantic word maps has the capability of allowing students to visual words in relationship to other words. Words that are grouped together utilize the process of prior knowledge and encourage the student to find a relationship of the new word to those already deeply processed.

By integrating word maps into the vocabulary lesson, the teacher employs a right-brained approach into the language arts curriculum. The application of a graphic organizer serves as a catalyst for the "visual learner".

The concept that prior knowledge plays an extensive role in comprehension is further studied and existing data back the premise that, "For new material to be meaningful to students, teachers must find ways to connect the new material to what students already know" (Arends, 1991 p. 240). Utilizing the principals of

cognitive psychology of learning, Arends presents four primary tasks that teachers can employ to help students acquire knowledge: thoughtful and skillful organization of learning materials, (2) providing students with advance organizers ... and (3) providing them with cues for drawing information from their long-term to their working memory" (p.234).

In order to produce long term effects for an effective vocabulary program, Stahl (1986) contends that the teacher should not provide only one prescriptive method in the classroom, but rather, give multiple exposures to the words. Giving the students only the vocabulary words and definitions to look up in a dictionary or glossary "does not appear to significantly improve comprehension ... we found that most words are taught precisely in the ways predicted to be ineffective" (p.665).

Students must be given ample time to investigate the word through a variety of methods which would appeal to a variety of learning styles. Stahl further emphasizes this recommendation by concluding that, "an active vocabulary program makes a student word conscious. Through class discussion, one student's knowledge can

fill in another student's lack... Semantic mapping involves taking words that children know the meaning of and adding to them to-be-learned words...Both of these methods appear highly effective" (p.667). Using the words in context was also determined to be part of the effective approach to a vocabulary program.

From the review of literature it is the contention of the writer to make an assumption that vocabulary instruction is not a singular style of teaching method. Due to the research found, students learning styles vary and should be accommodated through different teaching methods.

In order to accommodate the right brained learner, the use of semantic mapping appears to be an effective technique. It was found that using words in context would also trigger the students prior knowledge, thus enabling the student to relate individually to the new words presented. Further more, students should continue to use the dictionary or glossary to look up definitions, pronunciation, and parts or speech however this should not be the exclusive manner to which they will investigate the words.

In conclusion to the of review of literature, it was

determined that a multiple of described methods have been most beneficial for student long range retention and comprehension.

The characteristic that sets humans apart from other creatures is our unique way of using language. The essence of using language and being able to communicate is a vital function of language use. In spite of this ability, it has been determined that students do not always remember what has been learned. Investigations show that most students forget what they have been taught (Perkins).

After having reviewed the article, "The Connected Connection" (Perkins, 1993), the writer has selected and implemented several strategies to accommodate students in using language and enabling them to make "connections" which allow them to link what they have learned to their daily thinking. Using vocabulary and understanding its' broad range of meanings is one of the foremost examples of language development. Therefore it has been the undertaking of the writer to use a variety of teaching techniques to help extend and retain the students vocabulary word bank.

Several methods were employed to accomplish this

goal. Stahl has outlined principles of effective language learning which has been a model prototype for the writer. These positive findings from the review of literature demonstrate various means of teaching vocabulary to students to secure understanding and retention of the new information.

The initial instruction used in the vocabulary program was to give students a poem or a passage from a book. In the works provided, two vocabulary words were underlined. These underlined words were the weekly vocabulary to be learned by the students. The students read orally in class the literature presented. Through the presentation of vocabulary in context, they became cognizant that words can take on different meanings depending upon their use; as exemplified in the material they have just read. This context knowledge, as researched by Fairbanks and Stahl, required the students to "retrieve information from their prior knowledge" (p.74). From exposure to the words in context, the student followed the lesson by looking up the definition, pronunciation, and part of speech of each word using the dictionary and wrote down the information for later use. Here a balance "between definitional and contextual

information has created a better understanding of word meaning" (p.75). Students then discussed the words together. This gave them a preliminary review and presented finding which enhanced the group learning process. Students who did not understand or had difficulty benefitted from the group discussions and were able to make appropriate changes.

Next, students were given a semantic map to explore the vocabulary words. As suggested by Hodges (ERIC), the use of semantic mapping assisted the students by giving them an opportunity to categorize and arrange words on a right brained assist. This graphic organizer was able to accommodate those learners who are more adept when working with visual and spacial connections. The use of the graphic organizer also allowed students to find similarities and differences between the new vocabulary and words from their prior knowledge. A similar word map was used successfully by Banwart and Duffelmeyer (1993) which the writer has also employed with the students. Three different word maps were used in order to teach the nuances of the word. Depending upon the usage of the word in context, students completed a separate map for either nouns, adjectives and adverbs, and verbs. Upon completion

of the word maps, students used the words correctly in two separate sentences and wrote them on the back on their "map" sheets. The word maps also helped the students find properties and characteristics of the vocabulary word. These properties of the new word generated meaning and substance to the sentences they wrote. Students again will go over their findings together and receive feed back from the writer and their peers.

The final weekly activity was be a Friday test where by the students used and spelled the words correctly in two separate sentences. The entire vocabulary exercise was carried out from Monday to Friday over the 12 week implementation period.

A unique by product of the study was the students ability to create a more complex sentence. With the use of the right brained assists students applied the characteristics of the maps in the structure of their sentences. The results have been excellent.

The peer teachers who became active in the evaluation of the vocabulary project have also decided to use the program in their own classrooms.

CHAPTER III

Method

The administering of vocabulary instruction to students is generally considered to fulfill two main goals; the ability to introduce new words and to help students strengthen in memory the words they have learned. It is this principle of vocabulary instruction for which the writer has provided a blueprint.

The students participating in the vocabulary program are 20 third graders, aged eight and nine years old. They are from upper and middle income families. The vocabulary program was administered by the writer, the master teacher of the 20 third grade students. Each student participated in the vocabulary program as part of their regular language arts class. Materials for the vocabulary program were consolidated by the writer. Teacher made pretests, weekly vocabulary tests, vocabulary dictionary sheets, poetry or literature passages, and vocabulary right brained assists were distributed to each student during each new weekly vocabulary lesson. A blackboard was needed for the writer to use during the instruction

period.

Prior to administering the vocabulary program the students were given a pretest. Twenty four words were selected from the poems and literature passages. These words were broken down into a multiple choice vocabulary test and given over a period of two days. Each vocabulary word was underlined, presented in a limited written context, and followed by four possible answers.

Students were instructed to circle the letter of the correct answer. Of the students, the six students receiving the lowest test scores were monitored throughout the 12 week implementation period. Every four weeks, a cumulative teacher made matching test was administered to monitor student long term retention. Prior to giving any vocabulary assignments, the writer modeled the vocabulary lesson with the class to ensure understanding. Students also individually work along with the writer to practice the required steps they were to encounter during the 12 week implementation program.

On Mondays the students receive a poem or passage from literature with two vocabulary words in the text underlined. One student volunteer orally read aloud to the class the literature that had been passed out. Each

student received a teacher made form to complete and return the next day for homework. (see Appendix A) Students were required to use the dictionary to locate and record on the given sheet the pronunciation, definition, and part of speech for each word. They were instructed to look back at the literature passage or poem and compare the definitions with the word in context. Students need to find and write the definition which best fits the words' usage. Emphasis was placed on the student to find the correct dictionary definition which corresponded to the way the vocabulary word was used. this particular exercise proved to be even more productive than originally anticipated by the writer during the proposal stage of the practicum. It was discovered that this activity became a "mini" lesson and as a by product, the students became very proficient in learning the parts of speech of words in a sentence.

On Tuesday the students reviewed the Monday night homework together orally. Random students were called on to display on the black board the word pronunciation that they have found in their dictionary. Students were reminded to use the pronunciation key in their dictionaries for assistance during their Monday night's

homework process.

For Tuesday night's homework students were required to fill in the right brained assists for each word (see Appendix B, C, and D). Each student would follow the diagram instructions as indicated and return the two maps the following day: 1) Write the vocabulary word in the center oval. 2) Write the properties of the word marked "2". Think about "What the word is like." Use describing words. 3) Think about your word. What category can you put it in? When you decide, write that down in the box marked number "3". 4) Find 3 examples of your word and write them in the areas marked "4". 5) Find an opposite of your vocabulary word and write it in the oval marked "5". 6) Write a sentence using the information you came up with about your vocabulary word on the back or the diagram.

On Wednesday the students orally discussed the right brained assists they completed for homework. Prior to class beginning, the writer had drawn on the blackboard an over sized copy of the right brained assist. During the language-vocabulary class, students were called on to use their examples and help complete this over sized semantic map on the board. Each student shared orally the

sentences they had written. Emphasis was placed on the students to use the vocabulary word correctly in their sentence by remembering to follow the poem or passage they received on Monday as a model.

Students would continue to study Wednesday and Thursday night their vocabulary words. They were required to memorize the spelling of each word and be prepared to use the words correctly in student made sentences during the weekly test.

On Friday the students were tested on the two words. The test was in conjunction with their usual Friday spelling test. Students were graded separately for spelling of the vocabulary word and correct word usage. Students' graded tests were recorded. Maintaining results allowed the writer to monitor progress from week to week on each student.

If the writer found that the students had not increased test scores after the first cumulative test period, additional provisions had been made to increase the time spent on using the words in class during Wednesday and Thursday's language arts lessons. An exercise to reinforce the language program would allow students to use a clustering technique to record the

gathered ideas from each word. This activity would provide students time to be self-directed and further stimulate the flow of associated characteristics of each vocabulary word. Through the amass of detailed accounts, students would be able to again gather information around a specific topic, their vocabulary word. However, during the 12 week implementation period, it was not necessary to use any additional methods and the original provisions were found to be more than satisfactory.

During the first two weeks of the 12-week period, three peer teachers and the writer formed a core group similar to a "think tank". By aligning the instruction portion of the curriculum with an assessment formation by the peer teachers, an opportunity to evaluate the components of the curriculum was provided. At a peer teacher meeting, these professionals had time to examine and discuss the vocabulary curriculum. They were invited to sit in and observe the class during actual teaching.

Through this examination, the peer group engaged in an information exchange which resulted in a positive reaction. The peer teachers were in agreement that their present method of teaching vocabulary could be up graded. As a result three of the teachers decided to try the

program in their own classes. There was very few changes made to the writers program by the peer teachers; the original curriculum content and direction was left alone.

In addition to the peer teachers, the school Director initially discussed the vocabulary instruction with the writer. It was agreed that the vocabulary program could allow students from varying degrees of learning modes a positive method of learning and remembering vocabulary. The Director was informed during implementation process of the positive outcome resulting from the program.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The results of the evaluation is designed to determine the success of the program as well as assess the progress of the participants. The evaluation was indicated through formative and summative design. The formative evaluation shows the results of monitoring the program's implementation period. The summative evaluation is issued at the conclusion of the 12 week implementation period and intends to put the project on record.

The evaluation design used in this study was the pretest, post-test, cumulative test- retest group design. This design was selected because each student's test was scored using the same procedure and criteria. Test scores were compared using a nominal scale displaying the students achievements during the testing period of the 12 weeks.

A teacher made vocabulary pretest was designed from the compiled literary selections (see Appendix E). Each literary selection contains two specific vocabulary words totaling 24 words. The use of the pretest insured the

writer had a reliable evaluation tool to establish those students to monitor during the vocabulary program. The writer looked at the content validity of the pretest. This determined whether the test had measured the intended content area. The intended content are the vocabulary words. Pretest time frame was be over a period of two days.

As a result of the pre-test, six students, identified as A,B,C,D,E, and F, scored the lowest grades out of the total class of 20 students. The highest score that could be obtained on the test was 100%. The mean scores of the six students was 42.9 %. The range was 33.2%.

Pre-test Scores	
Student	Percent
A	37.4
B	20.8
C	49.9
D	54.08
E	45.7
F	49.9

The students were tested ever Friday of each week for a period of 12 weeks on the correct use of the vocabulary words in student made sentences. This post-test measurement determined the effectiveness of the right brained assists, vocabulary in content, and prior

knowledge to facilitate short term retention of vocabulary word usage. Analysis of the post-test scores with a comparison of the pretest scores measured any positive change from week to week.

Data obtained as a result of the weekly vocabulary tests show a significant increase in the test scores from the pre-test. The mean score over a 12-week period of weekly testing was 99.22 %. The range of the scores was 4.67%.

Over a period of four weeks, students were given a cumulative test-retest (see Appendix F). The students were tested on the same words they had learned over a period of four weeks. The test-retest procedure was administered 3 times during the implementation period. Each test totaled eight words, two words per week. This test-retest determined the effectiveness of the right brained assists, the vocabulary in content, and prior knowledge to facilitate long term retention of vocabulary usage. The mean score was 96.5 percent and the range was 25%.

Test-retest Scores: Period 1

Student	Percent
A	100
B	100
C	100
D	100
E	100
F	100

Test-retest Scores: Period 2

Student	Percent
A	100
B	100
C	87.5
D	100
E	87.5
F	100

Test-retest Scores : Period 3

Student	Percent
A	100
B	75
C	87.5
D	100
E	100
F	100

At the end of the 12-week implementation period the writer tested the students on the original pre-test. The results indicated positive outcomes. The mean score was 95.5%. The range was 20.1

As a consequence, the test retest coefficient was high. The evaluation for the test retest has determined a positive result in the vocabulary program. An increase

of at least 3% in their vocabulary scores by the targeted third graders has constituted a success rate.

Results of the early peer evaluation with the vocabulary curriculum indicated positive feedback from the peer teachers. All agreed that of the use of right brained assists, vocabulary in content, and prior knowledge should increase student test scores.

As a consequence of the peer teacher evaluation, it was determined that the peer teachers would wait before implementing the vocabulary program in their classrooms. After the completion of at least seven weeks into the implementation period of the writer they assessed the results and then determined use in their own classes.

Due to the high success rate of the writer, all three third grade teachers have begun to use the vocabulary program. Presently, feedback from these teachers has indicated very positive results with their own students. The teachers have found that the use of right brained assists with the whole class to be an inordinately positive interactive experience. It was found that some students were better able to generate ideas after group inspiration while improvements are being made in the area of abstract thinking.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Upon completion of the project, the writer has designed a vocabulary curriculum which has been adopted and presently being implemented by three third grade teachers in the site school. The project has the potential to carry over into subject areas outside language arts. The practicum could be easily adapted to a variety of classroom subjects inasmuch as vocabulary is applied in all areas of school curriculum. It is the intent of the writer to introduce the program to teachers in other grade levels as well as different disciplines outside of language arts. Specific subject areas to target would begin with the sciences, social studies, art history and the humanities.

Few changes were made by the peer teachers during their own treatment of the vocabulary program in the language arts curriculum. Modification came from the teachers' decisions to personalize the graphic organizers for their own needs. One teacher decided to replace the wording on the right brained assist to read, " What is it

similar to?" rather than, " What is it like? " Another decided to give the graphic organizer a simpler and more colorful format. The curriculum content and intent of the program remains unaffected.

The writer intends to describe, model, and share results of the findings at a middle level meeting at the site school. This decision would be concluded by the school director.

The writer will make the findings available to educators outside the site school by submitting the work to ERIC for publication.

References List

- Alvarez, M.C. & Risko, V.J. (November, 1989). Schema Activation, Construction, and Application. Bloomington, Maryland. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Digest No. ED 312 611)
- Arends, R. I. (1991). Learning to Teach. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Bateman, D. & Seaton, M. (1993). Accommodating Students with Different Learning Styles. English Journal, March, 80-82.
- Banwart, B.H., & Duffelmeyer, F.A. (1992/1993). Word maps for adjectives and verbs. The Reading Teacher, 46(4), 351-353.
- Blakey, E. & Spence, S. (1990). Developing Metacognition. Syracuse, N.Y. ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 327 218)
- Caine, G. & Caine, R.N. (1990). Teaching and the human brain. (special issue). Making Connections: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 33-36.
- Christen, W.L. & Murphy, T.L. (March, 1991). Increasing Comprehension by Activating Prior Knowledge. Bloomington, Maryland. ERIC Clearinghouse on reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Digest No. ED 328 885)
- DeFabio, R. (1982). Entering an interesting debate: an attempt to define language outcomes. English Education, October, 168-187.
- Fairbanks M. M. & Stahl, S. A. (1986). The Effects of vocabulary instruction: A model-based meta-analysis. Review of Educational Research, 56 (1), 72-110.

- Griggs, S. A. (1991). Learning Styles Counseling. Ann Arbor, Mich. Clearing House on Counseling and Personnel Services. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 341890)
- Hawks, P. (1986). Using graphic organizers to increase achievement in middle school life science. Science Education, 70, 81-87.
- Hooks, J.N. (1982). The Teaching of High School English (5th edition). New York:Macmillian Publishing Co.
- Hodges, R. L. (1984). Spelling . Urbana, Ill. Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 250 695)
- Hodges, R.L. (1984). Vocabulary. Urbana, Ill. Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 250 696)
- Ianacone, J. A. (1993). Vocabulary lists: the ambace of word study. English Journal, 41-45.
- Gill, K. & Proett, J. (1986). The Writing Process in Action. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Mitchell, D. & Tchudi, S. (1989). Explorations in the Teaching of English. (3rd ed.). New York: Harper Row.
- Perkins, D. (1993). The connected curriculum. Educational Leadership, October, 90-91.
- Stahl, S. A. (1986). Three principles of effective vocabulary instruction. Journal of Reading, April, 662-668.
- Stevens, K.C. (1982). Can we improve reading by teaching background information ? Journal of Reading, January, 326-329.
- Schwartz, R. M. & Raphael, T.E. Concept of definition: a key to improving students' vocabulary. The Reading Teacher, 198-205.



APPENDIX A

Name _____

Date _____

Vocabulary Word : _____

The pronunciation of this word is : _____

Part of speech: _____

The definition of this word is : _____

Vocabulary Word : _____

The pronunciation of this word is: _____

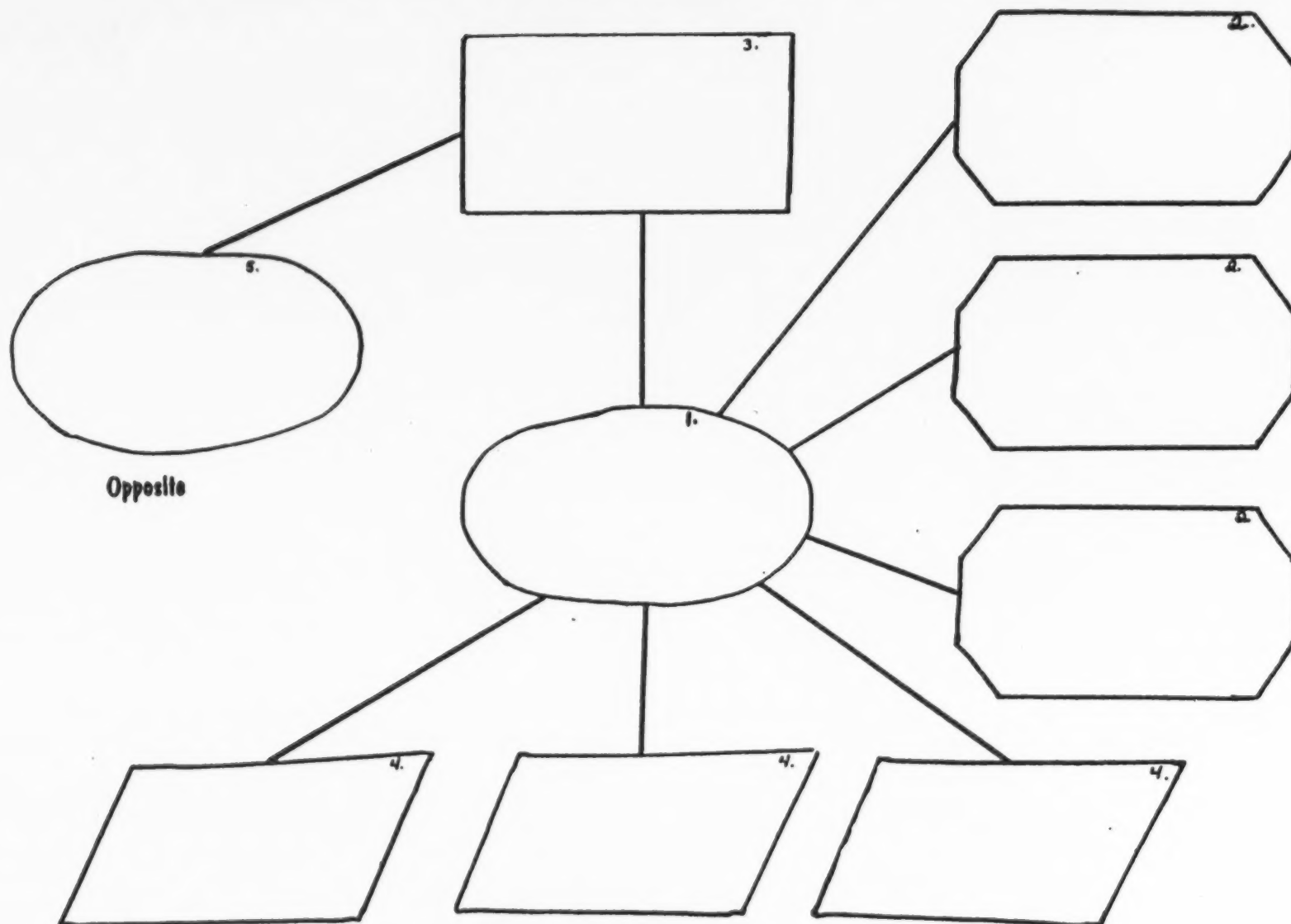
Part of speech: _____

The definition of this word is: _____

Be sure that your definition matches the part of speech !

What does it describe?

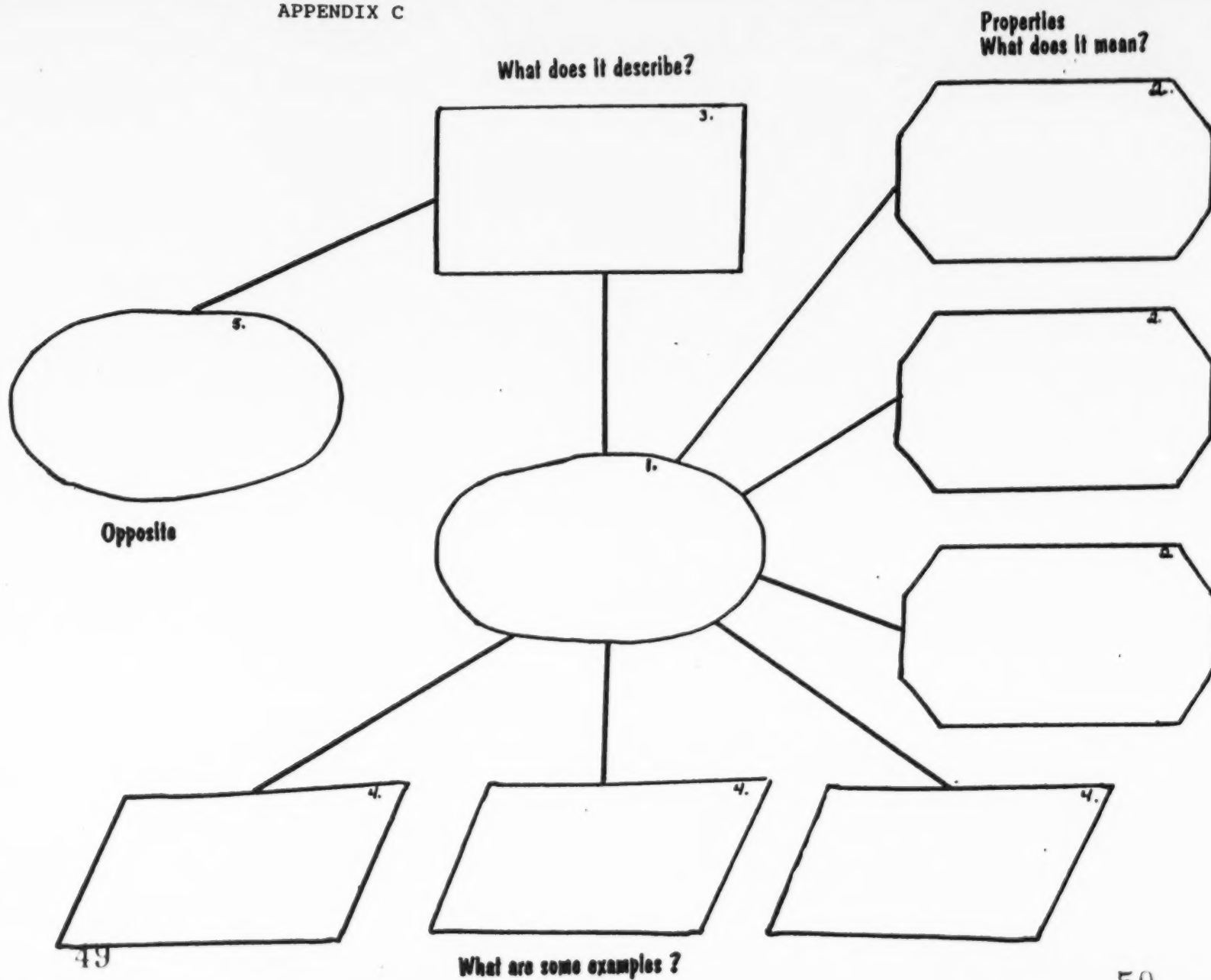
Properties
What is it like?

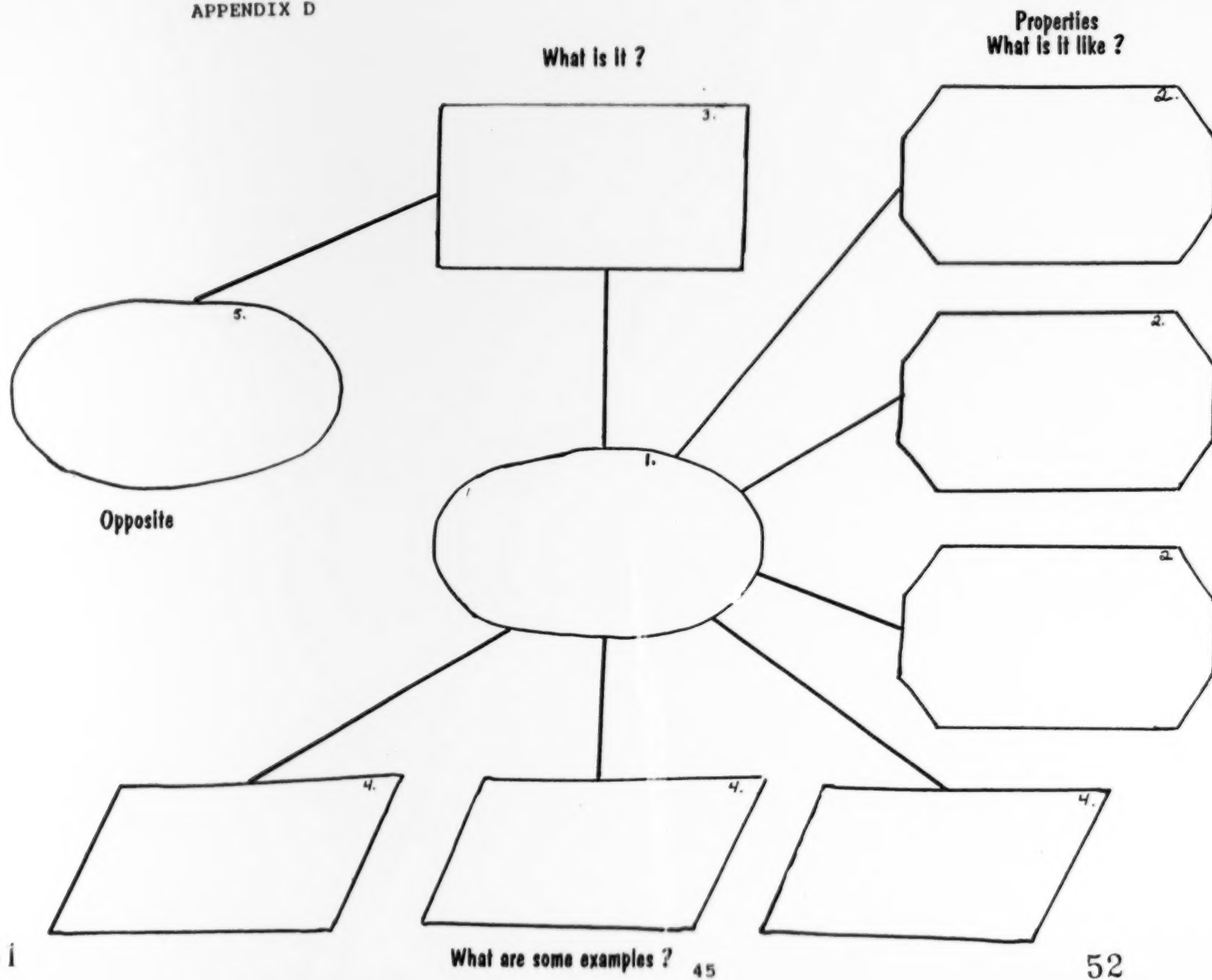


Opposite

What are some examples?

APPENDIX C





APPENDIX E

Vocabulary Match !

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the letter next to the correct definition of each underlined word.

1) aquarium

- a. a sports arena
- b. a container to keep fish
- c. a kind of dress
- d. a place to eat out

2) broth

- a. a thin soup
- b. a plant
- c. a strong leather
- d. a pin

3) haunches

- a. a safe place to live
- b. a part of the body of an animal
around its back legs
- c. a weapon like a spear
- d. to go on a visit

4) bellow

- a. to make a loud and deep sound; a roar
- b. to go under
- c. a bed on a train or ship
- d. to be correct on a test

5) moan

- a. to become very angry
- b. to make a low sad sound
- c. to be confused
- d. to make a mean face

6) gravel

- a. a hotel
- b. a hard bed
- c. small pieces of rock
- d. a kind of bird

7) cunning

- a. very clever
- b. very kind
- c. a long stick
- d. very pretty

8) granite

- a. a ship
- b. something special
- c. a hard kind of rock
- d. a history book

9) sleek

- a. smooth and shiny
- b. small and weak
- c. poor
- d. slow

10) fetch

- a. to make safer
- b. to go after and bring back
- c. to fix
- d. to dig a deep hole

11) misty

- a. a funny joke
- b. a pretty flower
- c. very tiny
- d. full of light falling rain

12) hemisphere

- a. a roller coaster ride
- b. a type of canoe
- c. half of the earth
- d. a valuable stamp

Vocabulary Match " 2 " !!

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the letter next to the correct definition of each underlined word.

13) stir

- a. to bake
- b. to enjoy
- c. to move
- d. to bury

14) downy

- a. having soft fluffy feathers
- b. a brush with a long handle
- c. sailing down stream
- d. a male rabbit

15) stray

- a. to wander away
- b. to dance
- c. to spread out
- d. to repeat with sounds

16) canine

- a. a bed cover
- b. group of animals which
the dog belongs to
- c. a male chicken
- d. a happy festival

17) planks

- a. soft metal
- b. farm tools
- c. long, flat pieces of wood
- d. sea animals

18) mush

- a. cornmeal boiled in water
- b. soft mud
- c. sweet candy
- d. a disease

19) pace

- a. a small piece
- b. a ruffle on a shirt
- c. a peaceful group
- d. a single step

20) vermin

- a. a vitamin
- b. small harmful animals
- c. purple flowers
- d. thin spaghetti

21) crimson

- a. a deep red color
- b. a person who does a crime
- c. thick milk
- d. a deep sound made by a frog

22) impudence

- a. a small person with wings
- b. imagination
- c. smelling like perfume
- d. rude behavior

23) roam

- a. to skip
- b. to wander
- c. to jump
- d. to catch

24) canvas

- a. a strong cloth made of cotton
- b. a container in the kitchen
- c. a wooden chair
- d. a truck

APPENDIX F

Vocabulary test retest

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the letter next to the correct definition of each underlined word.

1. stir

- a. to bake
- b. to enjoy
- c. to move slightly
- d. to bury

7) sleek

- a. smooth and shiny
- b. small and weak
- c. to fix
- d. slow

2. stray

- a. to wander away
- b. to dance
- c. to spread out
- d. to repeat with sounds

8) stray

- a. to wander away
- b. to dance
- c. to spread out
- d. to repeat with sounds

3. planks

- a. soft metals
- b. farm tools
- c. long, flat pieces of wood
- d. sea animals

4. mush

- a. cornmeal boiled in water
- b. soft mud
- c. sweet candy
- d. a disease

5. vermin

- a. a vitamin
- b. small harmful animals
- c. purple flowers
- d. thin spaghetti

6. cunning

- a. very clever
- b. very kind
- c. a long stick
- d. very pretty

Peer Evaluation Scale: Appendix G

1. Do the objectives help the learners develop proficiency at a sufficient level ?

High _____

Med _____

Low _____

2. Do the objectives help learners become creatively productive ?

High _____

Med. _____

Low _____

3. Do the objectives contribute to the student taking responsibility for his or her own learning ?

High _____

Med. _____

Low _____

4. Is the learning experience appropriate for the level of ability and age range ?

High _____

Med. _____

Low _____

5. Is the learning experience rich and complete in treatment of topic ?

High _____

Med. _____

Low _____

6. Does the instructional experience allow a diversity of learning through the use or multiple sources and the presentation of varying perspectives ?

High _____

Med _____

Low _____

7. Does the learning experience enhance the opportunity for group participation ?

High _____

Med. _____

Low _____

8. Does the learning experience enhance the opportunity for independent investigation ?

High _____

Med _____

Low _____

9. Does the curriculum go across domains of knowledge ?

High _____

Med _____

Low _____

10. Does the language lessons demonstrate process/product outcomes ?

High _____

Med. _____

Low _____